



Adventures in Misplaced Marketing

Herbert Rotfeld

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The modern marketing concept, with its focus on creating consumer satisfaction, makes marketing seem beyond reproach. Instead of its successes and failures, Rotfeld focuses on the uses, and frequent abuses, of marketing analysis. His book--a collection of clearly observed and forceful case studies drawn from his personal research and study--deals with the pragmatic realities of marketing and its limitations. He argues that marketing can only serve consumer predispositions. It cannot guarantee satisfaction. When marketers lose sight of this, they actually ignore their market. Rotfeld takes the unusual approach of providing a fundamental view of the relationship between marketing and its customers. He shows what can happen when that relationship is misperceived or its implications are mistaken. Marketing gets misplaced. For marketing practitioners and academics, his book is a unique study of how marketing and consumers interact.

As Rotfeld explains: Misplaced Marketing is a term I coined, using 'marketing' to refer to the marketing analysis of consumers and 'misplaced' to mean either 'lost' or 'ignored.' Many firms 'misplace' marketing in the sense of losing track of what it is and what it can do; many not-for-profit organizations do not use marketing in a way that could improve the results of their efforts. Just because marketing is satisfying consumers does not mean it is above reproach, since Al Capone satisfied many consumers too. Moreover, there are critics who fear marketing power and feel that any service to consumers is a problem for society. This is misplaced marketing in the sense that it is misused, abused, or tied to products that do not serve society's interests. Just because marketing perspectives are misplaced does not mean a product or service will fail, nor does it mean it should be banned. My book gives a perspective to understand the view of business critics and ways to improve business decision-making. The book also provides an unusual examination of the entire relationship of business to its customers.

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